

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

**1-8. (Cancelled)**

**9. (Currently Amended)** A control unit for an internal combustion engine provided with~~having~~ a three-way catalyst and an HC absorbent~~adsorbent~~ ~~operatively arranged in order on the~~an exhaust side of said internal combustion engine in this order, wherein said control unit has the engine,

a three-way catalyst warning control means that controls at the time of starting the said internal combustion engine the air-fuel ratio alternately to a rich state and a lean state until said three way catalyst reaches its activating temperature (250 °C to 400 °C); and

an HC absorbing catalyst warning control means that controls the air-fuel ration alternately to a rich state and a lean state in order to change the temperature of said HC absorbent, wherein

said HC absorbing catalyst warning control means starts the air-fuel ratio control when the temperature of said HC absorbing catalyst goes within the range of 100 °C to 200 °C and ceases the control when said temperature goes within the range of 250 °C to 400 °C.

~~said control unit being configured to optimize control of a temperature rise characteristic of said HC adsorbent by appropriate control of rich/lean exhaust for adjusting a temperature of said three-way catalyst.~~

**10. (Previously Presented)** The control unit according to Claim 9, further comprising a sensor which detects a temperature of said HC adsorbent.

**11. -12. (Canceled)**

**13. (New)** The control unit according to Claim 9, wherein said three way catalyst warning control means starts the air-fuel ratio control when estimation indicates completion of the evaporation of moisture in said three way catalyst.

**14. (New)** The control unit according to Claim 9, wherein said three way catalyst warning control means starts the air-fuel ratio control when a predetermined length of time has passed with the ignition timing held retarded after the starting of said internal combustion engine.